

THE GOSPEL AND PERSONAL SIN

**A Gospel Centered Approach to
Addressing Personal Sin**

Why Jesus Matters



Patrick J. Griffiths

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THE Story

The cross of Christ conquered sin. The woman's seed crushed the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). God has delivered His people from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. Victory is ours and the end is glorious. This study seeks to show and celebrate the believer's altered relationship to sin.

AN INITIAL COMMENT

In 1 John 2:1-2, John addresses sin in the life of the believer with this statement of fact:

¹ "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;** ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:1, 2).

God's declared will is that we do not sin. Yet despite this clear statement, our experience shows otherwise. We do sin. What is to be the biblical response to known sin in the believer's life?

The Christian life is NOT to be one of frustration, but victory. This does not mean life will be easy or that everything will now work to our immediate comfort or circumstantial happiness. However, it does mean that in the midst of our greatest defeat we can still have the confidence of God's unconditional acceptance and efficacious empowerment as conquerors. Throughout John's writings, he notes how our Lord's intent is that we have joy (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4).

"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11).

"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full" (John 16:24).

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves" (John 17:13).

"These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete" (1 John 1:4).

Our Lord speaks to this idea when He extends rest and a peace surpassing all human

achievement and understanding to the weary and heavy-laden.

²⁸ “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

As those who are now living in Christ and thus “under grace,” what does such a relationship look like in the life of the believer on a moment-by-moment basis? Should grace impact the way we currently live the Christian life? Does grace matter?

Question #1:
What place does sin have in the life of
the believer under grace?

There are three responses to this question.

1. The reality of sin in us

Because of our old self (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9), sin is always with us. There is a side of us that is always acting carnal, natural, and unregenerate. Such a thought is clearly presented in such passages as Romans 6-8, 1 Corinthians 3, and Galatians 5.

“knowing this, that **our old self** was crucified with *Him*, in order that our **body of sin** might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:6).

Romans 6:6 (see also Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) tells us that our “old self” has been crucified with Christ. The grammar indicates that this is a completed past action where the old self is the passive recipient of the work of Christ that now makes it possible for “the body of sin” to be destroyed.

A necessary distinction needs clarity. In the death of Jesus, the old self is pronounced dead.

Yet, despite the pronouncement, that “thing” (the old self) is still active. It does not, however, form the Christian’s identity before the Father regardless of how poor they might act or think.

Thus, to have something judicially declared true does not mean it will be experientially true. For one to *enjoy* the destruction of the old self there must be the knowing, reckoning, and presenting process of Romans 6.¹ It is vital we see the one as being certain and the other being inevitable though not automatic.

No matter how long we have been a Christian or how godly we may appear to be, we still have residing within us our old self. There is always a tension within us or what some have called, “the war within.” It is for this reason one will often hear of an older Christian who has fallen prey to their old self. Such events are sad and sorrow-filled, but they are not surprising. Every Christian is always capable of committing the most grievous and heinous actions. However, the Scripture is clear that such acts should not characterize the life of God’s people. No believer should be living in a pattern of sin

¹ We will expand on this thought under question 5 [p. 21]

(1 John 3:9). Yet sin in the life of the believer still happens. John speaks to this idea in 1 John 2:1,2.

While in this body, the flesh and the Spirit will always have contention. Neither one can exist in harmony with the other (Gal. 5:17). Yet the flesh is only temporary. The demise of the old self is certain because of Calvary. The final blow experientially whereby we lose the old self happens with our physical passing or the return of Jesus. Thus in the midst of our current struggle with our old self we should never lose sight that it is not eternal and will one day be finally lost.

2. The relationship of sin to us

Let us note three thoughts.

First, sin is a defeated foe (**the penalty of sin**). The death of Christ has defeated sin. Sin's defeat is viewed as a past fact. The penalty of sin has been removed from the believer.

“I am writing to you, little children, **because your sins have been forgiven you** for His name's sake” (1 John 2:12).

This same truth is emphatically stated in 1 John 2:12 (see also Rom. 4:7; Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13). God's forgiveness of us is a one sided agreement. *We sin; He brings His forgiveness.*

The sentence against sin has been pronounced and the execution of the sentence is certain. In the death of Christ, sin has been defeated. The weight of sin on us has been lifted. God will no longer credit it to our account (Rom. 4:8).

Second, sin is judicially dead (**the power of sin**).² A believer's old self was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). The purpose of this co-crucifixion was "in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." Our co-crucifixion is a historical fact. There was a point in time when our old self was crucified with Christ. At the cross, Jesus Christ did something to our old self.

"[Since] **you have died with Christ** to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees" (Col. 2:20).

² cf. Page 5

Colossians 2:20 (see also Gal. 2:20), “You have died with Christ,” also speaks of a completed and finished action. Thus, there is an element within us that had died and is dead in Christ.

It is because of our identification with Christ that the flesh has been “crucified with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). Such truth becomes apparent when reading Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:1-4, and 1 John 4:17.

Our co-crucifixion with Christ was a “judicial” action whereby we are declared dead, even though our old self is still very much alive. Its full or complete death will come at our physical passing or the return of Jesus (1 John 3:1-3), where what is **real judicially** will become **real experientially**.

Sin and its allies no longer have dominion over us (Rom. 6:9, 14; 7:1-5). We are no longer a subject within a kingdom over which sin rules. We no longer have to obey its dictates. It no longer has control over us. We may choose to sin and thus to place ourselves under its authority, but such does not have to be the case.

All of the necessary requirements for us to have victory over the power of sin in this life have been provided.

Finally, sin will one day be permanently removed (**the presence of sin** [Rom. 8:17b-30]). The joy of this truth has already been noted. As believers who live lives of constant struggle and longing, it is essential we realize that victory has already been secured and we are now only waiting for its full implementation.

3. The rule of sin over us

Because of our standing in Christ, we are dead to sin. This is the truth claim of Scripture. What does it mean, "To be dead to sin?"

"Even so consider yourselves to be **dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11).

We are no longer legally obligated to obey sin's dictates. No longer does sin hold sway over us. We now have the right and power to say no to its sinful demands.

This brings us to our second question.

Question #2:
What are the implications of Calvary
that impact our relationship to sin?

We will consider four responses to this question.

1. We are in Christ (Rom. 6:1-4).

¹ “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ** Jesus have been **baptized into His death**?
⁴ Therefore we have been **buried with Him** through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so **we too might walk in newness of life**” (Rom. 6:1-4).

Often we fail to understand what it means to be “in Christ.” Such a truth communicates a new position and identity. Because we are “in Christ” we have a new life (Rom. 6:5), a new hope, and a new master. It is the one idea that most frequently identifies the Christian in the New Testament. By being “in Christ” all that is His is now ours. We are joint-heirs with Jesus (Rom. 8:17a). The Father has imputed to our

account the very righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:6). Because of being “in Christ,” we now have immediate and direct access before the Father (Rom. 5:1). Whereas there was once animosity and wrath there is now only peace and satisfaction (Rom. 3:24, 25; 5:1). By being in Christ we are beloved children in whom He is well pleased (Eph. 1:4-14).

2. We are the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9).

“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed **the Spirit of God dwells in you**. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (Rom. 8:9).

It will often stagger the mind when one considers that God, the Holy Spirit, has chosen to reside within these jars of clay (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 4:7).

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your **mortal bodies through His Spirit** who dwells in you” (Rom. 8:11).

“Or do you not know that your **body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

Such condescension on His part is an act of indescribable grace. How the infinite has chosen to reside in the finite, the Creator within the created, is truly an expression of the inexhaustible riches of grace. Yet we have within us all that God is in the totality of His being. What a shocking truth. We have gone from Emmanuel, “God with us” (Isa. 9:6; John 1:18) to “God in us.”

3. We are the sure work of the Father
(1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

²³ “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ **Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass**” (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

This is the hope we now live with. God is going to complete the work He alone has begun. The

work of God in us and through us will not fail (Phil. 1:6; 2:12, 13; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

*“For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**”* (Phil. 1:6).

¹² “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure**” (Phil. 2:12, 13).

What we could not merit nor maintain, God Himself in grace will finish. The consistent message of Scripture is the work of God in us will not fail. The Bema Judgment is a universal declaration of God’s success and faithfulness in bringing to pass that which He had begun.

4. We are commandment-keepers (Rom. 8:3, 4).

³ “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ **so that the requirement of the Law**

might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4).

Just as in Adam, all are lawbreakers, so also in Christ His people are commandment-keepers. Just as in Adam we were an instrument of sin, so now in Christ we are instruments of righteousness. In Adam, one's identity as a lawbreaker was not determined by performance but by position, so also in Christ one's identity as a commandment-keeper is not determined by performance but by position.

Paul assures his believing audience that Jesus, having fulfilled the Law, fulfills the Law in and through His people. What God has given to us [i.e. His righteousness], He works in us and through us to those around us. Thus, His people live righteous, obedient lives.

The apostle John strikes this note repeatedly in his writings. Those who love God, keep His commandments. The commandment keeping is not in question unless the individual does not believe in Jesus. Thus, all who love God keep His commandments.

"If [Since] you love Me, you will **keep My commandments**" (John 14:15).

“If [Since] you **keep My commandments**, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10).

It is easy to sometimes see the “if” in the above verses as conditional and thus question whether we truly keep his commandments. However, 1 John 3:21-23 tells us that His commandment is to believe in the name of Jesus and to love one another. On this point, a believer does not falter.

²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³ **This is His commandment**, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us” (1 John 3:21-23).

Commandment keeping is not about rule keeping or good works. It is about believing and loving Jesus.

This brings us to our third question.

Question #3:
What does our sin do to us?

This question is always intriguing. When hearing someone say, "What happens when I sin?" our immediate response is to ask, "What does not happen when you sin?" In answering that question, the rest has a tendency to answer itself. If as a believer our sin no longer separates us from God, then what does happen? The good news is all the consequences of sin are horizontal. **Nothing vertically!** So how might we answer this question? Let us note four thoughts.

1. There is a providential judgment against sin which is corrective.

God has chosen to establish natural laws against sin's expression. There are natural laws established by God that determine the reaping of what is sown (Gal. 6:7, 8). There is an inherent demerit to all sin. The Scripture tells us, "that the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and that "the soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20). No one can sin and get away with it. Everyone shall pay the consequences for sin, whether in this life (for the believer and unbeliever) or in the life which is to come (for the unbeliever).

2. There is a sense of disappointment for failed responsibility.

With reference to the believer, there is a sorrow that happens in committing sin or in the failure to meet divine expectations. In the believer, **sin always brings remorse**. All believers recognize the innate inability to perform the good (Rom. 7:18). For those who see the cross and Christ clearly, there is a daily reckoning of human inability either to perform well or abstain from evil. The reality of human inability causes those who see Jesus to offer themselves up to Christ's work and that of the Holy Spirit to empower them for obedience on a daily basis. No one who knows their flesh ever puts any confidence in it to live the Christian life. **What hope the Christian has lies solely in Christ and His grace dealings with them.**

3. There is an initial straining and potential severing of human relationships from expressions of sin.

There is always a straining of relationships when one has sinned against another. Such offenses need to be dealt with immediately. Each is to act toward the other in a gracious manner. Never should such a condition exist long term.

Whether it is as simple as saying we are sorry, or where physical harm has been committed, the offending party needs to make sure that any necessary restitution has been made. As for the offended, forgiveness is to be offered immediately and unconditionally (Eph. 4:32). To act toward another in this fashion is to treat them in grace and to depend on God to meet the necessary needs.

4. There is the potential for unnecessary bondage to a pattern of sin.

Christians are not to live in sin (1 John 3:9-11). Such is completely incompatible with their position in Christ. Yet some out of weakness to the flesh or because of Scriptural ignorance have fallen prey to a pattern of sin (Gal. 6:1). Such bondage is unnecessary. No Christian need live in bondage to sin. **Sin will always take us further than we wish to go, cost us more than we wish to pay, and keep us longer than we wish to stay.** No believer "living in sin" wishes to be there. Victory is not only possible; it is our right. How to gain victory over daily sin will be discussed later.³

Let us now consider our fourth question.

³ We will expand on this thought under question 5 [p. 21]

Question #4:
What does our sin do to God?

One of our difficulties in speaking to this question is understanding God's "emotions" from a finite vantage point. God condescends to our finitude and uses human terms so that we might know Him. It is accurate to describe God as loving, wrath-filled, kind, displeased, etc., but we should use such descriptives cautiously and guarded for His ways are not our ways (Isa. 55:8). With this cautionary word, let us begin.

God hates sin. Such a simple statement can cause us to overlook the gravity of such a statement, but nonetheless God hates sin. **Our sin is serious enough for the Father to send His only begotten Son to be the Savior of the world. Regardless as to where it is found, God always hates sin.** Two thoughts are immediate. First, in the unbeliever, he is the object of God's present wrath (John 3:36) and is simply waiting His future wrath (1 Thess. 5:9). Second, for both the unbeliever and the believer, there is a natural consequence to all sin. Though the believer will never experience the wrath of God against sin (1 John 2:2, 4:10), it does not mean it is any less serious.

A question often asked when discussing this issue is, “Does God see the sin of the believer?”

The omniscience (the all-knowing attribute) of God means He has knowledge of all sin. However, because of the believer’s standing in Christ, **God the Father will never credit sin to the believer’s account and thus cannot deal with him in any other way than that of one who is as righteous as His only begotten Son.**

As a believer is exposed to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will take that Word and rebuke the believer for lack of conformity to the revealed Word (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:2). Such a rebuking is intrinsic to the Word. God is not, however, imputing such sin to the believer (Rom. 5:12, 13). But the Holy Spirit through the medium of the Word is working in the believer to put off the old self and put on the new through the renewing of his mind (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).

Question #5:
What should we do with our sin?

One of the tensions when approaching this thought is making it man-centered rather than Christ-centered. Although you and I act, our actions are fruits of the Holy Spirit. Thus, no such actions are possible apart from the working of the Holy Spirit. In addition, all such actions are natural and expected consequences of the believer's position in Christ (Rom. 6) and the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8).

Let us consider five responses.

1. Acknowledge sin by agreeing with God concerning it (1 John 1:9).

“If **we confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

First John 1:9 is somewhat problematic in its mishandling and abuse. The Apostle John speaks to that initial confession when the individual sees his own sinfulness and turns to Jesus only as his Savior from sin and death and for joy and glory. This confession [or agreement] births continued confession whereby the child of

God continually agrees with the Spirit's assertion as to who they were in Adam and who they now are in Christ.

Through the instrumentation of the Word, the Holy Spirit is working in the believer to acknowledge sin. Such an acknowledgment is an agreement with God concerning sin in the believer's life. No believer can avoid such an acknowledgment of sin. The confession of sin is to be seen just like any other fruit of the Spirit. This is the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of all true believers.

2. Repent of it and thus put off its presence and pattern (Eph. 4:22).

Though crucified, we are still called upon to lay aside the old self (Eph. 4:22).

“That, in reference to your former manner of life, you **lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted** in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22).

Though the old self is crucified and has been laid aside (Col. 3:9), it is still in a process of perpetual corruption (Eph. 4:22), thus the necessity to lay it aside.

“Do not lie to one another, **since you laid aside the old self** with its evil practices” (Col. 3:9).

The laying aside of the old self by the believer is an “already/not-yet” truth. Although it has been crucified (and is dead), and has thus been laid aside (Col. 3:9), it is still being corrupted (Eph. 4:22). In Colossians 3:9, the language suggests the action of dying is **judicial**, meaning the sentence against it has been pronounced or declared. The judicial pronouncement is real. It is now a matter of executing the sentence against it.⁴

3. Make no provision for its future manifestation (Rom. 13:14) by mortifying its deeds (Col. 3:5).

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh** in regard to *its* lusts” (Rom. 13:14).

“Therefore **consider the members of your earthly body as dead** to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

⁴ See further Question #1, page 4ff.

Our body of flesh is a vehicle of expression for our fallen nature. Thus we must control what our body of flesh does in the expression of our innate depravity (Rom. 6:19) by yielding to what we know is true.

For the believer, sin is still present.⁵ It reveals itself as “we present the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (Rom. 6:13). Because of the old self, believers are to “consider the members of their earthly body as dead” (Col. 3:5).

The strength of Colossians 3:5 builds on the foundation of 3:1-4. Whatever we once were, we no longer are, although we still have. The most natural action for those who have died with Christ (2:20) and have been raised with Christ (3:1) and whose lives are hidden with Christ in God (3:3) is to consider the members of their bodies as being dead to sin (3:5).

4. Seek to live in newness of life (Rom. 6:5) by knowing, reckoning, and yielding.

⁵ cf. Page 4, Question #1, Point 1.

“For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection” (Rom. 6:5).

Victory can only be **experienced** as one is practicing the reality of Romans 6. This is the classic passage on implementing one’s position into one’s practice. How do we walk in newness of life? How do we live the Christ life? There appears to be three “steps.”⁶

First, we should know the biblical truth of our union with Christ (v. 6). Do we have the fact of our union with Christ squarely planted in our mind? Do we understand sin no longer has power over us because we are dead? Know what the Word says about our union with Christ.

Second, we should reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ (v. 11). Both the exhortation (reckon) and the prohibition (let not sin reign) are ongoing commands. This is the truth of Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:1-3. Consider the information we know to be true, to

⁶ Our relation to God must not be reduced to steps and formulas. There is however these three ideas in Rom. 6 in relationship to the gospel.

be true! If we have died with Christ, then we are dead to sin. If we have been raised with Christ, then we can walk in newness of life. However, we must take one more “step.”

Third, we should yield our body as an instrument of righteousness (v. 13), present our body to God as a living sacrifice. We must place ourselves at His disposal. Just as in Adam we were instruments of unrighteousness, so now in Christ we become instruments of righteousness.⁷ We must trust Him for everything. Just as we came to Him for salvation, now we must come to Him for sanctification. We should not yield ourselves to sin, to feed its appetites and desires (Rom. 13:14). We must abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11).

Making the idea of yielding or walking as conditions to be met is like telling someone to go to sleep. We can understand what sleeping is, but it is not necessary to sleeping. We can command someone to sleep, but commanding them will not put them to sleep. We go to sleep without effort when we simply relax. The same is true of yielding, walking, or being led. When we try, we make it something that it is not. It is

⁷ cf. Page 13, Question #2, Point 4.

only when we rest in Him that it takes place. Paul gives one final descriptive of the resurrected life.

5. Since we are living in the Spirit, now seek to be led by Him (Gal. 5:25).

“If we live by the Spirit, **let us also walk by the Spirit**” (Gal. 5:25).

It is unfortunate many feel as if they must resign themselves to the power of the flesh. We have made the flesh our reality when our reality is the Spirit. We are called upon to live our lives in this earthen body according to our position in Christ. Such a call has validity because of the impact of positional truth into this current realm. As Christians, victory is indigenous to walking in newness of life.

Two statements summarize our relationship before God as it relates to our identity in Christ. **First**, we cannot undo by our actions what He has done through His actions. **Second**, what we merit by grace, we cannot maintain by works. Think about what this is implying.

- He declared us right in justification.

- He removes relational hostility through reconciliation.
- He removed all wrath through propitiation.
- Every action He has done made it possible for us to have fellowship with Him.

This is not an exhaustive listing, but it does begin to show us how far we fall short in practicing our position as it relates to the renewing of our minds.⁸ All that we have before the Father is merited by grace. All that He has done through the incarnation and substitutionary sacrifice, we cannot undo through our actions. Since these things are true, which we have no reason to believe otherwise, we can enter into the rest promised in Matthew 11:28-30.

²⁸ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.** ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

⁸ cf. The short booklet "Who Am I? Why Jesus Matters from Romans 8" for an explanation on this idea.

The abundant life noted by the apostle John is present and enjoyed as we rest in His finished work and believe what the New Testament says of us in union with Him.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have **life**, and have *it abundantly*” (John 10:10).

CONCLUSION

Recognizing that it is His working in us and through us, we choose to stand in His Son. We choose to live in the fullness of His forgiveness. We choose to live in His limitless love. We choose to accept a more than abundant grace. We desire to live the Christ life.

We are free from condemnation because Jesus, through His death, condemned sin. If we must still face His wrath, then the death He died was insufficient. The law is powerless to condemn sin in the flesh. It is powerless to liberate the sinner from the power of the flesh. However, the incarnation enabled Jesus to condemn sin in the flesh.

If this pardon from condemnation does not reach into our current practice, then we do not understand what it means.

Until we see the shallowness of life lived apart from Christ, we will never see the sufficiency and satisfaction of life lived in Christ. May we hunger after all that God has already secured for us in Christ.

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